



State of Connecticut

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Testimony of Senator Rob Kane

SB 438, AA Requiring Proof of United States Citizenship or Other Legal Residency In the United State In Order To Obtain Or Renew A Motor Vehicle Operator's License

Senator DeFronzo, Representative Guerrero, and members of the Transportation Committee, I want to offer my support for *SB 438, An Act Requiring Proof of United States Citizenship or Other Legal Residency In the United States In Order To Obtain Or Renew A Motor Vehicle Operator's License*. I am co-sponsoring this bill with Senator Michael McLachlan.

The intent of our bill is to offer a measure of protection to everyone who has a legal right to be here by helping to prevent identify theft; helping to prevent fraud, including voter, welfare and Medicare fraud; and promoting public safety by preventing people from obtaining multiple licenses from different states.

Specifically, our bill calls for requiring proof of United States citizenship or legal residency in order for anyone to obtain or renew a driver's license in Connecticut. Furthermore, licenses issued to legal residents would expire at the same the legal residents' legal right to remain in our country expires.

Passing the bill would help put Connecticut in compliance with the federal Real ID requirement that only residents and legal residents be permitted to obtain driver's licenses, and that those licenses remain valid only for the amount of time the legal resident is permitted to remain in this country.

If we do not pass this legislation by December of 2009 we will be in violation of the Real ID Act. This could have serious consequences for Connecticut residents as our identification may no longer be accepted for entry to federal buildings or airports. While there is a chance that the new administration in Washington may relax some of the

requirements of the Real ID Act, the provision we are supporting today is still a good, commonsense approach to licensing and should pass.

This is not the first time the General Assembly has considered this type of legislation. When it was debated in 2003, opponents called it insensitive to illegal aliens. In reality, this legislation is sensitive to the rest of the population who are law-abiding citizens. People who are in our country legally would still be able to obtain driver's licenses. However, passing this bill would ensure that licenses issued to anyone legally visiting our country would expire when the license holder's legal residence here expires. That is just common sense.

The state Department of Motor Vehicles does require proof of residency before issuing a driver's license, and visitors from other countries are required to show proof of legal status. This legislation is just intended to ensure that when a visitor from another country is no longer residing here legally, his or her Connecticut driver's license is no longer legal either.